



OREGON ARTSWATCH

ARTS & CULTURE NEWS

(<https://www.orartswatch.org>)



(<https://cmnw.org/>)

An inner compass: Music and refugees from the past to the present

Upcoming multimedia concert with flutist Amelia Lukas probes the meaning of home on multiple levels.

APRIL 4, 2023 | JAMES BASH([HTTPS://WWW.ORARTSWATCH.ORG/AUTHOR/JAMES-BASH/](https://www.orartswatch.org/author/james-bash/))

MUSIC ([HTTPS://WWW.ORARTSWATCH.ORG/CATEGORY/MUSIC/](https://www.orartswatch.org/category/music/))



Flutist Amelia Lukas performing with Fear No Music.

The idea of homeland has been an acute global issue for more than two decades, with people leaving their homes and often risking their lives to find a safe place to live. Now with the war in Ukraine, the refugee crisis has become more acute than ever, with millions fleeing to neighboring countries.

The situation in Ukraine has struck a nerve with virtuoso flutist Amelia Lukas (<https://amelialukas.com/>), who will explore the meaning of home in her concert *Natural Homeland: Honoring Ukraine* (<https://amelialukas.com/performances/natural-homeland-honoring-ukraine>) this Thursday.

“My father’s side of the family is all from that region of the world: Poland, Russia, and Ukraine,” said Lukas. “My grandfather’s mother – so my great-grandmother–was from Ukraine. They came to the U.S. through Ellis Island, and my grandfather grew up on the Lower Eastside of Manhattan. So I resonate with the people of Ukraine.”

Lukas sees an inspirational message despite current turmoil.

“The Ukrainian resistance has been truly astounding, shifting the global mindset around what’s possible in the face of adversity,” remarked Lukas. “They have protected their homeland with a courage, strength, and spirit that has been mind-boggling. This program shines a light on that, and

helps us to develop a more comprehensive sense of what home means along with deeper gratitude for the community, the people, and the places that we call home.”

Lukas, who has degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London, performed extensively in New York City before moving to Portland in 2014. She is a member of Fear No Music and has appeared with Chamber Music Northwest, Oregon Bach Festival, Willamette Valley Chamber Music Festival, and many other groups.

Natural Homeland will be the first concert that Lukas has designed and produced here in Portland. Conceptualizing and producing unique concert experiences are skills she honed in New York where she founded and directed for seven years the highly acclaimed multi-media series, Ear Heart Music.

Sponsor



(<https://cmnw.org/>)

My concert aesthetic is multifaceted and holistic,” noted Lukas. “I’m interested in integrating components that enhance our experience of the music and cater to our modern brains which are accustomed to stimulation on multiple levels. In addition to featuring numerous flutes, from the piccolo to the bass, Natural Homeland embraces multi-media through visuals that include projections, live painting, lighting design, and dance.”

Right away, concertgoers will be immersed in the theme with Ukrainian folk music and slides of works by acclaimed Ukrainian painter and muralist, Tatyana Ostapenko. Later in the program, Ostapenko will paint a new work during one of the pieces, and that painting will be available for silent auction with the proceeds going to the Slavic and Eastern European Center and Ukrainian Care.

Painter Tatyana Ostapenko. Photo by Tracy Pitts.

The program starts with *Plyve Kacha*, a traditional Ukrainian tune that has become like a second national anthem, memorializing the men and women who died during Maidan in 2014, known as the Heavenly Hundred. “I found a stunning vocal arrangement of this work,” said Lukas, “which I have set for a variety of flutes, using a backing track. So it will sound like a flute choir with the addition of guest bass clarinetist Lisa Lipton.”

Oregon composer Lisa Ann Marsh’s *Albatross* is inspired by the fact that the seabird is a living compass. It always knows the direction home and where it’s going. For Lukas, the music suggests that each of us can tap into this inner knowing.

Nadir Vassena’s *Come perduto nel mare un bambino (A child lost at sea)* pays tribute to the refugee crisis, and the people that risk their lives crossing oceans and deserts to find a new home. “It’s a moving piece that uses the flute in a way that I have never heard before,” noted Lukas. “It features lots of cool extended techniques. The beginning is super intense with a totally immersive evocation of gasping for air. Then we are clearly underwater, with bubbles ascending, and finally the spirit rises into the ether with a ghostly whistle tone.”

Within by Ian Clarke has a Celtic sound and uses several flutes and backing tracks to evoke the beauty of East Africa.

Gemma by Ukrainian composer Ludmilla Yurina is inspired by jewelry – portraits carved into little pieces of stone – like a cameo.

Sponsor



(<https://cmnw.org/>)

“Women in Eastern Europe wear these portraits on their headdresses, necklaces, and carry them in their pockets,” explained Lukas. “Having the likeness of someone dear to you on your person reminds you of home wherever you are. It is during this piece that Tatyana will paint and that will be projected live – in real time – onto a screen behind me.”

Four Blossoms on a Single Stem by Oregon-based composer David Bernstein speaks to the Native American experience and their loss of homeland. It is based on a vision of Black Elk of the Oglala Sioux, who survived the Wounded Knee Massacre and became a respected medicine man. The piece conveys that in the midst of tragedy and sorrow, there is always room for something beautiful to grow.

For Eve Beglarian's *I will not be sad in this world*, Lukas will play the bass flute with electronics. This piece will feature dancer Tiffany Loney, also of Ukrainian heritage, in an evocative choreography that organically and creatively depicts a broad range of emotions in her uniquely narrative style.

Carlos Simon's *Move It* depicts what it is like to leave home at a moment's notice. That feeling applies to many situations around the world – even in Oregon where people had to leave their homes because of impending wildfire. This piece will be accompanied by video footage of a train ride from Kharkiv to Kyiv.

The concert will conclude with a brief conversation with the artists and program partners. It will provide the opportunity to connect with one of the biggest issues facing people today, and that can be a positive, thought-provoking experience that every audience member can take home.

<https://www.orartswatch.org/membership/>

James Bash

<https://www.orartswatch.org/author/james-bash/>

James Bash enjoys writing for *The Oregonian*, *The Columbian*, *Classical Music North America*, *Opera*, and many other publications. He has also written articles for the Oregon Arts Commission and the Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition. He received a fellowship to the 2008 American Journalism Institute for Classical Music and Opera, and is a member of the Music Critics Association of North America.

[\(https://www.orartswatch.org/author/james-bash/\)](https://www.orartswatch.org/author/james-bash/)

SHARE:



2 responses

Robert Eugene Priest April 4, 2023 at 6:47 pm (<https://www.orartswatch.org/an-inner-compass-music-and-refugees-from-the-past-to-the-present/#comment-150090>)
He says:

Hey James,
Thanx for such a thoughtful preview of Amelia's upcoming labor of love concert. Pani Lukas is one of Global Village PDX's great musical treasures & we are all fortunate that our here of the now is where she calls home!
Czesc,
Bobski

James Bash April 4, 2023 at 7:28 pm (<https://www.orartswatch.org/an-inner-compass-music-and-refugees-from-the-past-to-the-present/#comment-150091>)
says:

Thanks Bob! Pani Lukas. She is a human flute, methinks.
